

The World of Islam

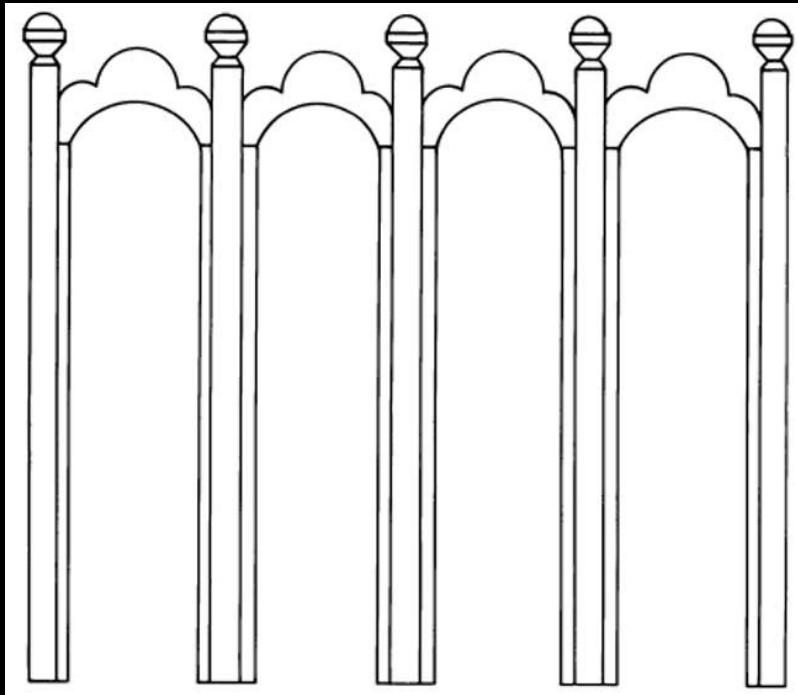


The Rise of Islam

- In the seventh century, a new faith took hold in the Middle East.
- The followers of Islam, Muslims, believe that Allah (God) transmitted his words through Mohammad, whose followers began to record those words in the Qu'ran (Koran).
- Muslims believe that salvation is achieved through submission to the will of God.
- This can be accomplished by following the Five Pillars of Islam.



Five Pillars



- Confession of faith
- Prayer 5 times a day
- Charity to the needy
- Fasting during the month-long Ramadan
- Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during one's lifetime

The Rise of Islam



- Islam is guided by the concept of *jihad*, which means to “struggle.” This refers to both the struggle to be a better Muslim and the struggle against non-believers.
- Early on, Islam split into two groups: Shia and Sunni. The split occurred over who should succeed Mohammad as the leader of the faith.

The Rise of Islam

- Growing up in the city of Mecca in the Arabian Desert (present day Saudi-Arabia) Mohammad was exposed to many different beliefs, in part because Mecca lay on the trade routes between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. Once he began preaching the monotheistic religion of Islam, he came into conflict with the leaders of Mecca, who had both economic and religious interest in maintaining the status quo.
- The leadership wanted to maintain the polytheistic shrines that attracted pilgrimages and brought wealth to the community.

The Rise of Islam

- Persecuted and threatened with death, Mohammad and his followers fled to Medina in 622 C.E. in what is known as the **hijra** (which also marks year 1 on the Muslim calendar).
- Mohammad and his followers found support in Medina and in 630, he returned to Mecca and destroyed the pagan shrines- except for the Ka'ba, which became the focal point of Muslim pilgrimage.
- From there, Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. Lands where Islam was practiced were known as “Dar al Islam” House of Islam.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits



- When Mohammad died unexpectedly in 632, Abu Bakr, one of his followers became the caliph, the head of state, military commander, chief judge, and religious leader. Think of it as a sort of emperor and religious leader all in one person.
- The Islamic Empire was known as a theocracy, a government ruled by immediate divine guidance but because it was ruled by a caliph, the theocratic Islamic Empire was referred to as a caliphate.
- In the early years the growth of Islam was closely linked to the growth of this empire.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits

- As time went on, the caliphs began to behave hereditary rulers but there was no clear line of succession. The first four were Abu Bakr, Umar Uthman, and Ali. Ali was assassinated and was succeeded by his son, Hasan.
- Under pressure from a prominent family in Mecca, Hasan relinquished his title, making way for the **Umayyad Dynasty**.
- This dynasty would enlarge the Islamic Empire dramatically, this would also intensify conflict with the Byzantine and Persian Empires for almost a century.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits

- During the Umayyad Dynasty...
 - Capital moved to Damascus, Syria
 - Mecca remained the spiritual center
 - Arabic became the official language of the government
 - Gold and silver coins became the standard monetary unit
 - Conquered subjects were “encouraged” to convert to Islam- those who did not convert were forced to pay a tax.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits

- The Empire grew ENORMOUSLY under the Umayyads, expanding as far northern Africa and into Spain
- Numerous times the Umayyads they attacked the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, but failed.
- The Islamic Empire began to move to Europe,, by the way of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain). At this time Muslims held parts of southern Iberia and southern parts of Italy, while Christians dominated the all the regions to the north.
- Charles Martel, a Frankish leader, stopped the Muslim advance in its tracks as it tried to advance towards Paris

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits



- Despite the success of the Umayyad Dynasty (the Dome of the Rock was built in Jerusalem during this time) problems with succession started to emerge.
- The Muslims split into two camps Shi'ite and Sunni.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits

- **Shi'ite (Shia) Islam** holds that the son-in-law, Ali was the rightful heir to the empire, based on Mohammad's comments to Ali.
- **Sunnis**, in contrast, though they hold Ali in high esteem, do not believe that he and his hereditary line are the chosen successors; rather, they contend that the leaders of the empire should be drawn from a broad base of the people. This split remains today.

The Empire Grows as the Religion Splits

- As the Shia began to assert themselves more dramatically, the Umayyad Dynasty went into decline.
- The Umayyad Dynasty was defeated (punctuated by the slaughter of some of the family).
- It was replaced by the Abbasid Dynasty around 750.

Abbasid Dynasty: Another Golden Age to Remember

- The Abbasid Dynasty reigned from 750 to 1258 until the Islamic Empire was defeated by the Mongols.
- Arts and sciences flourished
- Built a magnificent capital at Baghdad, which became one of the cultural centers of the world
- Built around **trade** and **manufacturing**
 - The merchants introduced the unique idea of credit to the empire's trade mechanics to free them from burden and DANGER of carrying coins
 - They developed a system of itemized receipts and bills, innovations that were later used in Europe and elsewhere (ANSWER #10)
 - Steel, was produced for the use of swords

Abbasid Dynasty: Another Golden Age to Remember

- Advancement were also seen in medical and mathematics field
 - Mohammad al-Razi- published a massive medical encyclopedia
 - Contributions to algebra
- Defeated the T'ang Chinese army 751
 - Fighting for control of the Silk Road
 - – What is important is that the Chinese POWs were carrying **PAPER MONEY**...

Abbasid Dynasty: Another Golden Age to Remember

- Once they figured out how to make paper money they stocked their libraries and universities with scholarship from all over the known world
- Thrived on...
 - trade
 - international scholars
 - military and cultural expansion

Cultural Exchange



- So despite the hostility between the European and the Islamic worlds, the Islamic Empire is credited with playing a significant role in preserving Western culture. When the Muslims found the writings of Plato and Aristotle they translated them into Arabic.
- In the contrast to European civilizations during the Middle Ages, which were highly decentralized and dismissive of their ancient past
- Later, when the Christians and Muslims battle for the city of Levant, during the European Crusades, Europe found its own history preserved in Arabic libraries and museums. This again demonstrates the how the interaction between two peoples (even when violent) can lead to trade and **cultural exchange**.

Abbasid Dynasty: Another Golden Age to Remember

- The Muslims, similar to Romans, were often tolerant of the local customs of the areas they conquered.
- That is not to say they did not make an attempt to convert people (remember the tax)
- Though it was a theocracy, its more flexible approach contributed to its rapid growth
- The **Sufis**, Islamic mystics, were its most effective missionaries. They stressed a personal relationship with Allah, in contrast w/ other religions that were more focused on a particular ritual. The Sufis converted large numbers of people to Islam.
- This made Islam highly adaptable to many different circumstances.

Women and Islam: For Better, for Worse

- Traditionally in Arabia women were viewed a property themselves
 - If a man divorced a women he was allowed to keep her dowry
 - This low status for women led to a culture in which baby girls were seen as less valuable than baby boys. This often translated into female infanticide, the killing of an unwanted baby girl
- The Qu'ran (established between 651 and 652) changed much of this...

Women and Islam: For Better, for Worse

- The Qu'ran (established between 651 and 652) changed much of this...
 - Women remained subservient but were treated with more dignity
 - Had some legal rights
 - Were considered equal before Allah
 - If a man divorced... return dowry
 - Infanticide was forbidden
 - Women gained influence in the home and some had influence outside the home
 - Mohammad's first wife was a successful businesswoman

Women and Islam: For Better, for Worse

- The Islamic society was still a man's world
 - Up to 4 wives, as long as they were supported and treated equally
 - Women had to be faithful to one man- in part because land was passed through males, and the identity of a boy's father couldn't be questioned
 - A woman's testimony in court was only half the weight of a man's
 - Women had to be veiled in public
 - Primary duty was to be to care for her husband and family

Decline of the Islamic Caliphates: Internal Rivalries and Mongol Invasion

- The Islamic empire regularly had **internal struggle** and civil war
 - None of these threatened Islam, they did destabilize the central authority and at Baghdad and cut tax revenues
- The final blow came when Turkish slaves or mamluks revolted and established a new capital at Samarra in central Iraq, while other groups carved out the empire.
- It would be their most distant enemy, **the Mongols**, who would defeat them.

Mongol Invasion

- During the Crusades in 1258, the Mongols overran the Islamic Empire and destroyed Baghdad.
 - end of the Abbasid Dynasty
 - People would flee to Egypt, where they remained intact but powerless
 - Eventually the Ottoman Turks would reunite Egypt, Syria, and Arabia in the new Islamic state, which would last until 1918